



Jocassee Journal

Information and News about the Jocassee Gorges



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Admiring the breathtaking view from Jumping Off Rock in northern Pickens County's Jocassee Gorges are (from left) Glenn Gardner, Jean Leitner and Stewart Grinton of the South Carolina Wildlife magazine television show.


Jocassee Gorges is on the telly!

‘South Carolina Wildlife’ television show frequently films in area

The Jocassee Gorges area has become one of the favorite backdrops for the “South Carolina Wildlife” television show on South Carolina Educational Television.

“South Carolina Wildlife” is a production of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and South Carolina Educational Television and airs the second Saturday of each month at 7 p.m. on public television (check local listings for other showings). Introductions to the show were recently filmed at Jumping Off Rock, high above Lake Jocassee, and the show’s crew has filmed a number

of episodes in the region, including shows on black bear, Laurel Fork Heritage Preserve and prescribed burning. Viewers of “South Carolina Wildlife” see a variety of outdoor pastimes and places, and get close-up views of special plants, animals and natural communities in the Palmetto State. The show is hosted by DNR staffers Jean Leitner and Glenn Gardner, and is produced by the DNR video team of Gardner and Stewart Grinton.

Segments from episodes of “South Carolina Wildlife” television show can now be viewed on the Web by visiting www.dnr.sc.gov/scwtv/index.html. This Web site can also be used to order a DVD of “Best of South Carolina Wildlife TV: Volume 1” and to set up e-mail reminders to watch the show. 



Before and after photos show the remarkable transformation on the Laurel Fork Creek streamside restoration project. At left is one particular section before restoration, and the photo on the right shows the improved results. In the photos are Mark Hall, Jocassee Gorges project manager, and Kyle Graham with Environmental Permitting Consultants of Greenville.

Laurel Fork Creek restoration completed

Cliffs Communities funds stream work as mitigation

In 1998, the S.C. Department of Natural Resources knew it had its work cut out when it acquired Jocassee Gorges. All was not “well” in Jocassee. Logging and intense all-terrain vehicle uses had taken their toll.

Jocassee Project Manager Mark Hall had the task of unraveling the mysteries of what had taken place over the past 100 years. Management records were scant. The landscape needed some obvious bandages and a lot of tender loving care. Hall identified impaired conditions on Laurel Fork Creek, knowing restoration efforts would be costly. Hall also represents DNR on wetland projects in the Upstate, and in 2004 he saw a chance to repair the Laurel Fork Creek system through a trade, or wetland mitigation. He reviewed a proposed project by the Cliffs Communities where The Cliffs would be required to restore wetlands in order to legally impact existing wetlands in Pickens County.


In 2006, Cliffs Communities and DNR reached an agreement where The Cliffs would restore the Laurel Fork Creek system as compensatory mitigation to offset the impacts of development elsewhere. In fact, The Cliffs committed to do about twice as much as would normally be required, according to Hall. James B. Anthony, Cliffs Communities founder and president, said: “We viewed this as a good environmental trade-off. Better yet, it was a wise investment to promote quality of life in the Upstate.” Hall said Cliffs Communities will not have any special privileges in regards to the restoration project, and The Cliffs is obligated to maintain the restored system for five years after completion.

Laurel Fork Creek originates near Laurel Fork Gap

in the heart of Jocassee Gorges. Several tributaries begin within the Laurel Fork Heritage Preserve, and the stream flows generally westward about four miles, then over Laurel Fork Falls and into Lake Jocassee. The valley was populated in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Some old home sites are discernable by walnut or fruit trees tended by past inhabitants. Timber was harvested extensively in the area in the 1900s, and a road with numerous small bridges was established in the valley along the stream.

Hall’s analysis determined that the natural channel of the stream had been significantly altered, probably in the early 1900s. Inadequately sized bridges and culvert pipes had been installed. The floodplain had been altered to the extent that floodwaters were not properly reaching the floodplain. Many wetland functions and values were lost as a result. The existing road was being scoured by heavy rains with hundreds of tons of silt deposited in Lake Jocassee below.

The project began in Spring 2007. Culvert pipes and bridges were removed and replaced with fords. The stream was re-diverted back to its natural channel. The road was properly graded and shifted away from the creek. Native plants, boulders and large woody debris were placed along the stream buffer to create habitat and restore natural processes. Extensive seeding, mulching and water diversions were used to protect water quality.

“We worked with Environmental Permitting Consultants of Greenville and J.D. Galloway Grading of Rosman, N.C., to get the job done,” said Hall. “They spared no expense in protecting the environment during the entire project, and it was a first-class operation. The Laurel Fork Creek corridor will be soon be the highlight of Jocassee. I suspect there will be a few ‘jewels’ in the stream for the trout fishing enthusiast as well.” 

Construction begins at Gorges State Park

Some areas of North Carolina state park closed as visitor facilities project gets underway

Construction has begun on new visitor facilities at the Grassy Ridge Access area of Gorges State Park in North Carolina, and several trails and facilities will be affected during the year-long construction period.

Park hours are currently 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Bearwallow Falls, Bearwallow Valley, Buckberry Ridge and Ray Fisher trails are currently closed. The Ray Fisher camping area is also currently closed.

Gorges State Park began construction Sept 4. on a \$6.4 million dollar project to clear, grade and pave about 4 miles of roadways, parking areas for about 350 vehicles, clearing and grading for the park's visitors center, picnic

areas and maintenance area, as well as some electrical and water systems.

The park is still open with limited facilities. The Frozen Creek Access area (near Rosman, N.C.) off of Frozen Creek Road, is open with no changes to operating hours or facilities. Grassy Ridge Access (in Sapphire, N.C.) off of NC Highway 281 is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.—trails and camping facilities have been closed due to construction in this area.

Picnic areas and access to the Horsepasture River (owned and operated by the U.S. Forest Service is available at Grassy Ridge Access.

Visitors are highly encouraged to contact the Gorges State Park office at (828) 966-9099 or check the Gorges State Park Web site at <http://ils.unc.edu/parkproject/visit/gorg/home.html> for additional information and updates on the construction project. ❁



Riding the waves

Three young boys get ready to slide down a watery chute at Long Shoals Wayside Park along SC 11, one of many recreational activities in the Jocassee Gorges area. A two-year study on recreation in the Jocassee Gorges area, commissioned by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources and conducted by Clemson University, was completed this year. The study looked at a variety of recreational uses, including hunting, fishing, hiking, birdwatching, mountain biking, horseback riding, paddling and many other activities. A comprehensive story on the study will be featured in the Spring/Summer 2008 edition of Jocassee Journal. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

Devils Fork State Park blends stewardship, recreation

Kiosks from S.C. Heritage Corridor grant will describe area's natural, cultural resources

By Jim Stanton

Stewardship and service are the two guiding principles of the South Carolina State Park Service and Devils Fork State Park. Devils Fork State Park is proud to serve as the only public facility on the deep, clear, picturesque mountain reservoir known as Lake Jocassee. Our main goals at Devils Fork State Park are to provide a safe access point for recreational opportunities on Lake Jocassee, while also protecting the sensitive environment found within the Jocassee Gorges region. Devils Fork State Park offers many amenities that other parks in and around the Upstate area offer, but not many can say they have as beautiful a backdrop to enjoy and play in.

Devils Fork State Park is in the process of constructing four information kiosks that will serve not only to depict the park layout and location of our facilities, but also elaborate on the cultural and natural resources that abound within the park. Each kiosk will contain a park map, information on park rules and general information, and they will also tell the story of what this land was like prior to the flooding of the Jocassee valley. We plan to explore the environment and cultures that existed prior to the creation of the lake. This kiosk project is a possible through a grant and assistance by the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor. Devils Fork State Park is part of the South Carolina Heritage Corridor, and together we plan to interpret the history of the region, and tell the story of this part of South Carolina's past.

Trail improvements and possible trail reconstruction are also being considered for the near future for Devils Fork State Park. There are two trails currently available at Devils Fork State Park: Oconee Bell Nature Trail and Bear Cove Nature Trail. Each has certain areas that need some attention and redevelopment. Because of the fragile ecosystem of the native Oconee bell, *Shortia galacifolia*, trail monitoring and protection of these rare plants will be necessary to protect them for future generations to enjoy. Both trails are open to the public for hiking only. Please stop by the park office for directions to the trailheads. Four wayside exhibits will also be staged at intervals along the two trails to interpret natural characteristics found along these hikes, thanks in part to the South Carolina Heritage grant.



One of many waterfalls in the Jocassee Gorges region pours into Lake Jocassee near Devils Fork State Park. The state park on Lake Jocassee features a number of recreational activities, including boating, camping, hiking and paddling. (S.C. State Park Service photo)

Many recreational activities take place here at Devils Fork State Park for those taking advantage of the opportunities provided by Lake Jocassee. Boating, fishing, picnicking, swimming and scuba diving are some of the daily activities that many people engage in while visiting the park. All types of watercraft are permitted on Lake Jocassee, provided they are properly registered and are safely operated. Devils Fork State Park has no designated swimming area within Devils Fork State Park; however swimming is permitted at your own risk along the shoreline of Lake Jocassee.

Devils Fork State Park is the only public access point to Lake Jocassee within South Carolina, and we are often a very popular destination throughout the year. Because Devils Fork State Park is also entrusted to care for the protection of the natural resources within the park, we must take efforts to provide a balance between use and conservation. Parking is often difficult to find within Devils Fork State Park on summer weekends. A limited number

Continued on page 5

Lake Jocassee is stunning backdrop at Devils Fork

Continued from page 4


of parking spaces exist for vehicles towing boat trailers, as well as for those who do not. Specific areas have been designated for vehicles with boat trailers only, in order to provide the maximum capacity of boat traffic to the lake. Single vehicles may be parked within walking distance to the lake at the park's picnic area. Parking is never permitted on grass, wooded or mulched areas, and is also prohibited along roadsides and high traffic areas.

The main boat launch area consists of a boat dock that is designated for loading and unloading of passengers and equipment, but is intended for short-term boat docking. While this main boat launch area is open 24 hours a day, there is no overnight boat docking available or permitted at the boat dock. There are two additional day-use boat ramp locations past the campground: the Devils Fork ramp to the left, and the Round House ramp to the right. Many scuba diving classes meet at the Round House remote ramp, as the grade is gradual to access the clear waters of

Lake Jocassee at this location. However, this ramp is not designated specifically for divers, and the remote boat ramps may be used by canoeists, kayakers, or motor boat operators as well. The cove adjacent to the Round House ramp is marked as a boat exclusion area.

Devils Fork State Park offers several unique lodging opportunities for those who wish to stay next to Lake Jocassee. Twenty fully furnished villas offer comfortable overnight accommodations for two or more nights. Our campground consists of 59 standard campsites with water and electrical hook-ups, and 25 primitive walk-in tent campsites are also available for camping in close proximity to the lake. We have added large tent pads to many of the standard campsites to allow for larger tents, while minimizing the impact to the forested area around each site. For information about camping or villa rentals at Devils Fork State Park, please visit our Web site at www.southcarolinaparks.com. Reservations may be made up to 11 months in advance for all villas and campsites. Length of stay restrictions for various time of year often exist, so please go online to check for available dates.

While at Devils Fork State Park, please feel free to contact one of the park staff. We will be glad to point out areas within the park, interpret the natural areas found in the area, or answer any questions you may have.

(Jim Stanton is assistant manager at Devils Fork State Park.) 

Crucial piece of Blue Ridge acquired

Land near Raven Cliff Falls trail now part of Caesars Head State Park

A patch of woods atop the Blue Ridge Escarpment has been added to Caesars Head State Park, but it's no ordinary piece of Upstate property. The 17 acres of woodlands high atop the Blue Ridge were purchased by the S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (PRT) in July to help protect the dramatic view and the integrity of one of the state's most beloved hiking trails.

Now part of Caesars Head State Park, the land includes frontage on US 276 (Geer Highway) and is adjacent to the Raven Cliff Falls hiking trail, a 2.2-mile hike through the forest to the tallest waterfall in South Carolina.

The property was purchased from Greylogs LLC of Chapin, a private landowner. The transaction was made possible through the joint efforts of the landowner, Naturaland Trust, The Nature Conservancy, businessman and conservationist Ben Geer Keys of Greenville and the S.C. State Park Service, part of PRT.


"Securing this property for the people of South Carolina ensures that one of our most distinctive landscapes and picturesque views will remain intact," said PRT Director Chad Prosser.

An estimated 20,000 people a year take the walk to the 420-foot falls. The newly acquired land lies just north of the Caesars Head State Park headquarters and Raven Cliff Falls trail head and includes ridge line and level mountain-top property. Residential development has been accelerating along US 276 near the park.

The purchase does not include the Greylogs homestead itself. The landmark building and three surrounding acres remain in private hands.

Funding for the \$763,456 purchase of the 17 acres surrounding the homestead came from the Recreation Land Trust Fund, which provides state-funded reimbursable grants that can only be used for the acquisition of land for the purpose of public recreation. The Greylogs acquisition was approved in June by the State Budget and Control Board.

Caesars Head and Jones Gap state parks comprise the Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area, which now encompasses 11,130 acres of mountain vistas, forest coves, hiking trails and pristine trout streams along the Blue Ridge Escarpment, where the mountains fall sharply off to the piedmont, creating such dramatic features as Raven Cliff Falls.

For more information on Caesars Head State Park and Raven Cliff Falls, visit www.SouthCarolinaParks.com or contact Marion Edmonds, PRT director of communications, at (803) 734-1370 or medmonds@scprt.com. 

First real backpacking trip

Hikers let the 'real world' slip away on the Foothills Trail

By Stuart Greeter

I love trails, all kinds of trails, walking, hiking, biking, and paddling. So I was really enjoying the presentations at the State Trails Conference earlier this year. When Heyward Douglas showed pictures of the Foothills Trail, I knew I had to go there. I happened to be at a point in my life where the idea of being completely independent, and a long way from everything else, appealed to me. At the break, I cornered Greg Lucas, who was a big backpacker and knew the Foothills Trail. "Greg, I'm thinking about hiking the Foothills Trail." "Stuart, that's really great that you're going to through-hike the trail!" "What? How long is it?" "Seventy-six miles." "Hmmm, let's see, at about ten miles a day, I should be able to do it in about a week?" "Sure you can!" Well, as you might imagine, that was a mistake. But I was brand-new to backpacking and I was definitely hooked on the idea. And the more friends I told about my new idea, the less chance I had of backing out.

When I mentioned the idea my friend Philoma, she said, "I'm going!" This was a surprise, because I considered backpacking to be "rough duty," a "man's job." Silly me! Turns out that my friend's pack weighed about half what mine did, and she even brought her knitting along. She was a better hiker too. (See Backpacking Rule #1 below)

Always helpful, Greg suggested I read Colin Fletcher's "Thousand Mile Summer." Good idea! I learned a few important things from that book. Most importantly, I learned that it's the experience, not the miles. And, I didn't even have to hike a thousand miles to figure that out. Everyone will ask you how far you hiked or how much did your pack weigh? It's not about that. It's about being away from everything and having the time to notice things only children notice. It's about pondering the "other things" you never have time to think about. It's about having an adventure. It's being like a child again, doing whatever you feel like doing, stopping when you want, "wouldn't that be a great place to swim? Let's do it!" You don't have to do any of the things you always have to do. Don't have to listen to nobody. At least I was starting out with the right attitude.

What should I take? The outdoor-goodies stores have too many nifty gadgets. I couldn't possibly carry all the things I purchased. My friend Jay put it succinctly when he said, "It's a matter of learning what things you really need to be comfortable and what things you just think you need." I thought I needed a lot of stuff, particularly food. Yes, I like to eat! Hiking all day long, I'm going to need a lot to eat! Not so. For some unexplained reason, all I



Getting ready for an adventure on the Foothills Trail are S
the 76 miles of the Foothills trail traverse the Jocassee Gor

desired was small amounts of food. I actually carried twice as much food as was really needed. Ah but happy hour, don't go without that! Forget about carrying heavy beer or drink mixers. All you need is a little libation and a snack. Those little vacuum-packed cheese and sausage treats do well for happy hour. One evening we had two packs of "nabs" as an appetizer and they tasted wonderful. You get the idea.

What should I take for food? I had no idea grocery stores had all these nifty little food packs. You can actually take precooked chicken and tuna with you. So after field-testing many recipes, here's the best-ever backpack meal: Lipton-Sides whole grain stroganoff noodles, with Chicken-of-the-Sea Albacore, and Belizean hot sauce! OK, here's probably the all-time second-best ever recipe for backpackers: Lipton Asian-sides Teriyaki Noodles, Chicken-of-the-Sea Albacore and Belizean orange-pulp Habanera pepper sauce. Do you see a pattern here? You wouldn't believe how many different combinations you can make with these things. Just be sure to add your favorite hot sauce.

For anybody going backpacking the first time, I would

proves to be a revelation



tuart Greeter (left) and Philoma Skipper. About 45 miles of
ges region. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

definitely recommend a one-night trial run. It can be in your own backyard, if you like. Carry, camp, and cook the same things you are going to use on your trip. Luckily we did that. I was using my little Optimus stove, which is hot enough for the burner to get cherry red. When Philoma stirred the pot with the (light-weight) plastic spoon, it curled up in a little circle. Kind of tough to eat out of a spoon like that.

So we have plenty of time to plan for this new adventure. When we finally get there, Carly Simon's song "Anticipation" is going through my head. Philoma has even gotten a subscription to Backpacker Magazine. "They recommend using two walking sticks. Let's see, lengthen them to go uphill and shorten them to go downhill? Or was it the other way around?" We're at the point where we are worrying about things that don't really matter. All worries are forgotten once we hit the trail.

As we head out the first day, the weather report calls for heavy rains, thunderstorms, and possible high winds. Jay recommended going, even if the weather is not cooperating. OK it rained. And it's all about attitude. Keep a "can-do" attitude and you'll be fine. Glad I bought a

pack-cover, though. That first night we put the tent up in the rain and dove in. The tent's full of sand! Oh yeah, our friends were using this tent in the desert! (See Backpacking Rule # 4)

Philoma somehow loses my cup, which evidently floated downstream while she was filtering water on Pigpen Branch. As luck would have it, the next day, I notice a cup lying beside the trail. It has "Chase" written across the bottom. I clean it up and use it for the remainder of the trip. Recycling at its best! "Thanks Chase!"

Hiking down into the Chattooga River valley, we pass a several groups of trout fishermen. Have you ever noticed that you can tell a lot about a trout fisherman from his clothes? We pass two gentlemen; each dressed in matching outfits, dark green and khaki in color with Orvis labels strategically located throughout. We refer to them as the "Orvis Brothers." "Catch anything?" "No." A little later, three rather rough-looking "locals" (don't want to use the word rednecks) walk past carrying fly rods. They're wearing shorts, tennis shoes, and dirty T-shirts. "Catch anything?" The stocky, short guy pauses, just long enough so I wasn't sure that I was going to get an answer. Then with a sideways squint-eyed look, he nods slowly and in a low voice he says, "We caught a few." Now those boys knew what they were doing!

On the third day, we woke up on the Chattooga River. I met a real fly fisherman, and we talked about fly-fishing. Well mostly he talked and I listened. We talked about dry flies, wet flies, and sinkers. "You'll catch more fish on the bottom, but I like to catch them on the top." I noted that I saw others fishing down-river yesterday. "They were using something bright orange." "That's salmon eggs," he said. "That's cheatin'." When he opened his little fly box, I didn't ask about the bright-orange balls he had in there. He was using a caddis-fly and gave me a copper-John and a prince to try out when I got home. He said stoneflies work well also. I decided I would try fly-fishing on the bottom.

Philoma and I have our first disagreement. It's getting late in the afternoon, and I suggest we backtrack to a campsite we already passed. She wants to press ahead and see what shows up. The blister forming on my heel is not helping my attitude, at this point. We keep going and find a lovely little, hidden-away campsite near the East Fork. I was wrong! The firewood was collected and waiting by the stone fire ring. Wonder who did that? Foothill Trail Conference volunteers? I collect more wood in the morning and leave it for the next campers.

On the fourth day, we got lazy and started late. I looked at the map and, for the first time, didn't bother to

Continued on page 8

Oconee Mountain name officially restored


Local effort convinces government to change mountain name back to original

In 1959, a surveyor for the U.S. Geologic Survey penciled the notation "Station Mountain" on the mountain peak that had been known as Oconee Mountain for hundreds of years. If regulations had been followed, three local citizens should have been asked the name of this landmark, but regulations were not followed. This careless act, which probably took less than 15 seconds to accomplish, set in motion a chain of events that took the efforts of hundreds of people months to undo.

On Nov. 1, 2006, the ladies of the Wizard of Tamassee Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution submitted a petition to the U.S.

Board on Geographic Names requesting that the original, historic name be restored. This petition was accompanied by about 20 additional letters of support from historic organizations, government offices, civic groups and others.

On April 12, 2007, after reviewing overwhelming evidence documenting the historic name, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names voted unanimously to restore the original Native American name to Oconee Mountain.

A rededication ceremony was held on the peak of Oconee Mountain on Saturday morning, June 16, 2007. Several state and local dignitaries attended, as well as members of the Cherokee Bear Clan of South Carolina, Boy Scout Troop No. 45, the Walhalla Garden Club, the ladies of the Wizard of Tamassee Chapter of the DAR, and members of the Oconee Arts and Historical Commission. 

'Rules' of backpacking learned

Continued from page 7

count miles. That's a good thing. Each day I think I'm finally into backpacking and then each day I get an even better understanding of what it's all about. I can't imagine what it would be like to be out for two weeks. It takes time to shed the demands of daily life.

We're standing on a footbridge crossing the Whitewater River, taking a break and enjoying the view. Philoma is talking about how good a beer would taste right now. Three day-hikers walk by and she says, "You wouldn't happen to have a beer in that pack do you?" "As a matter of fact I do. How long have you been out?" "Five days." "Here, you deserve it." Hot or cold, didn't matter, a Corona never tasted so good! Thanks buddy! Philoma still has the bottle.

Backpacking Rules highly recommended:

- #1) It's always good to have a friend along.
- #2) Don't trip over your own walking stick.
- #3) Never walk forward, while you are looking backward. (Don't ask how I learned this.)
- #4) If you borrow a tent, don't just put it up before you go, also clean it out.
- #5) Don't let your cup float downstream while you are filling your canteen.
- #6) Don't try to throw your food cache cord over a tree limb while you are standing on the cord.
- #7) When you wake up in the morning and are wandering


around half asleep looking for your food, save yourself some time and remember that it's tied up in a tree.

- #8) If you're going to wash clothes, do it during the middle of the day so you won't freeze.
- #9) Before you go to sleep, make sure the air valve on your sleeping pad is closed tight.

Did I finish the through-hike? No. But it doesn't really matter. What does matter is that I will be going back. I've got to see the rest of that trail. And, the feeling of independence and adventure is addictive. Adventures make life worth living and getting back to nature is a wonderful thing to experience.

I just recently read that Colin Fletcher passed-away in June of this year. Bob Sipchen suggests that Fletcher might serve as inspiration to tear young people away from their computers and experience the benefits of backpacking. Trouble is, few young people have ever heard of Colin Fletcher and fewer still are actually looking to find him. It's up to you parents out there to provide that experience. Please do it. The results are amazing.

Many thanks to those who made the Foothills Trail a reality. "Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing." Helen Keller

(Stuart Greeter works in the DNR's Habitat Protection Section.) 



Fishing conditions will be improved at Dug Mountain Angler Access Area on the Eastatoee River in northern Pickens County. A project undertaken by Duke Energy, Trout Unlimited, Pickens County and the S.C. Department of Natural Resources will upgrade the area. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

Dug Mountain Angler Area improvements scheduled

Popular fishing area on Eastatoee River to be upgraded

Listening to the peaceful sound of a creek flowing, casting your fishing line, or walking along a secluded nature trail are some of the things you can enjoy at Dug Mountain Angler Access Area on the Eastatoee River.

Everyone, however, may not be aware of this place. It's a hidden jewel located off SC Highway 11 on Roy F. Jones Highway. Entrance to the access area is on the right, just past the Eastatoee River bridge, approaching from Highway 11.

Dug Mountain Angler Access Area was originally developed by Duke Energy and the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide parking for this popular recreation site. DNR manages this area as a hatchery-supported trout stream, which draws a lot of use from anglers. Prior to development of the site vehicles had to park along the road shoulder, which was very dangerous.


While it's a beautiful area that offers access for activities such as fishing and hiking, some enhancements

are needed. Individuals from DNR, Duke Energy, Trout Unlimited and Pickens County are working together to upgrade Dug Mountain to provide an opportunity for more folks enjoy it. Plans include:

- grading the entrance and re-paving the parking area
- arresting erosion going from the site into Eastatoee River
- building a barrier-free pathway from the parking area to the creek and foot trail
- installing a platform over the creek to enhance angling opportunities for people with special needs
- clearing the foot trail pathway
- future sustainable maintenance

"The partnership among the groups involved has been tremendous," said Steve Hammond, Duke Energy hydro manager for the Keowee-Toxaway and Nantahala area.

"We share the same goal to make Dug Mountain more accessible to all folks while protecting its scenic beauty. We are certainly open to others who would like to become involved with this project."

The plans and drawings are complete, and work is slated to begin in the latter part of this year and be complete by 2008. 

Jocassee area is the perfect setting for learning about burning

Wood Magic Forest Fair teaches forestry lessons to fourth-graders By Scott Hawkins

This fall, the South Carolina Forestry Commission wrapped up another successful week of the Wood Magic Forest Fair. The Forestry Commission's Piedmont Forestry Center lies in the most beautiful part of the state, proudly making us neighbors with the Jocassee Gorges community.

Wood Magic is the Forestry Commission's and timber industry's chance to teach children about the benefits of renewable resources, the role forest lands play in preserving water quality and about the benefits of prescribed burning and the dangers of wildland fire.

In late September, fourth graders from area schools come for a nearly day-long visit to the Piedmont Forestry Center (located near Tamassee in northern Oconee County) where they spend four hours moving from station to station. They learn a new aspect of forestry at each stop. Students make paper, dress as wildland firefighters, check out timber harvesting equipment and visit a portable sawmill to see it in action. Learning opportunities in settings like this are as rare as the beauty that's found in the Upstate of South Carolina.

Students represented schools from all over the upstate. From Abbeville County we hosted students from Cherokee Trail Elementary out of Donalds. Greenville County was represented by Mt. Zion Christian School from Simpsonville. Oconee County schools present were Northside Elementary from Seneca and Orchard Park Elementary from Westminster and Tamassee-Salem Elementary. Pickens Elementary from Pickens County sent students to the Wood Magic Forest Fair, and Spartanburg's Pine Street Elementary sent a number of classes. In all, about 550 students took part!

Patterned after a program held annually at Mississippi State University, Wood Magic is jointly sponsored by, the South Carolina Forestry Association, U.S. Forest Service, South Carolina Forestry Commission and Clemson University. The goal of the program is to teach students how important forests and forest products are in their everyday lives. A key point made during this event is that through sustainable management we can enjoy the many benefits of a growing forest and can also harvest trees for the thousands of useful products that improve our quality of life. The goal is accomplished through a variety of hands-on activities led by forestry professionals from several organizations.




Students at Wood Magic Forest Fair, dressed in Nomex fire-retardant shirts, learn about the benefits of prescribed fire from Lynn Leclair, a forester with the S.C. Forestry Commission. (S.C. Forestry Commission photo by Michelle Johnson)

Because of Wood Magic's proximity to Devils Fork State Park on Lake Jocassee, some of the Forestry Commission employees are housed for the week in a lakeside villa. Lake Jocassee is the main reason there is never a shortage of volunteers to work Wood Magic. After their work-day ends, Forestry Commission employees can often be found on and around the lake, appreciating its beauty possibly planning a family

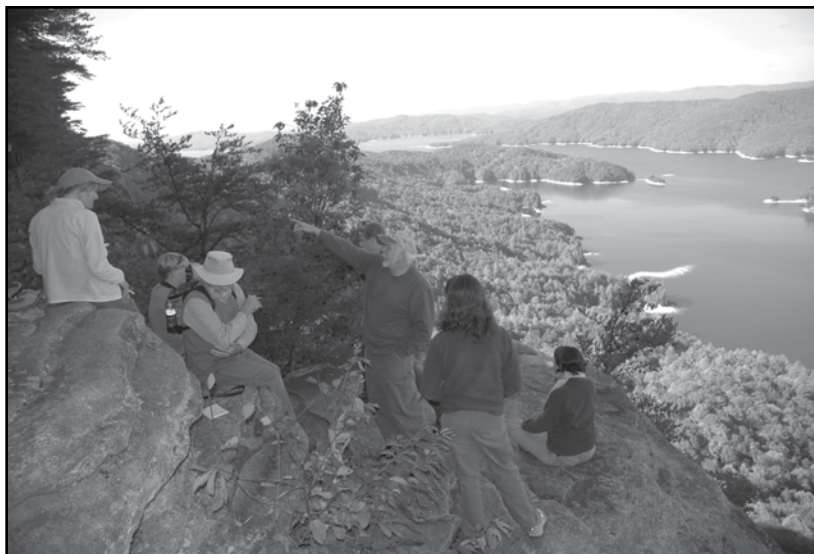
weekend trip in the not-too-distant future.

Wood Magic Forest Fair kicks up again later in October at the Forestry Commissions headquarters in Columbia. The Environmental Education Center at Harbison State Forest is another great venue for the Wood Magic Forest Fair, which is a good thing—Devils Fork and the Piedmont Forestry Center are hard acts to follow.

(Scott Hawkins is a public information coordinator with the S.C. Forestry Commission. For more information on the Piedmont Forestry Center, visit <http://www.state.sc.us/forest/pfc.htm>. For more information on the Wood Magic Forest Fair, visit <http://www.state.sc.us/forest/wmfair.htm>.) 

Masters of the natural world

Pickens County naturalist Dennis Chastain talks to the Upstate Master Naturalist class at Jumping Off Rock. The 10-week class, patterned after the popular Master Gardener program and coordinated by Clemson Extension Service, recently concluded its first run in the Upstate. For more information on the class, visit www.clemson.edu/masternaturalist/. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)



Ellicott's Rock a geographic milestone in state

Natural and cultural history are part of Clemson's SC MAPS program

Ellicott's Rock is called Ellicott's Rock because, in 1811, when the border between the two Carolinas and Georgia was in dispute, Georgia hired Andrew Ellicott, one of the country's most prominent surveyors at the time, to find the point where the 35th parallel crossed the Chattooga River.

Ellicott and his crew walked all the way from Elberton, Ga., (which was the capital of the Peach State at that time), to a place called Commissioner's Camp near Caesars Head to begin searching for the 35th parallel. They then traversed the 20 miles of rugged mountains to the Chattooga River. After recovering from "the severest day's labor" he had ever experienced, Ellicott and his crew, with their clothes torn into tatters, their "limbs and bodies" lacerated, and with blood trickling off their fingers, finally reached the point on the Chattooga River that he determined to be the 35th parallel. There he installed the letters "N" and "G" on a rock on the eastern bank of the Chattooga—"N" for North Carolina and "G" for Georgia. This is the true Ellicott's Rock.

On another section of the same rock outcropping, about 15 feet downstream, is another inscription, "LAT 35, AD 1813, NC + SC." This is often mistaken for Ellicott's Rock but is actually Commissioner's Rock. This benchmark was established by a second survey team


commissioned by both North and South Carolina to set the location of the 35th parallel in 1813.

Teachers in South Carolina and North Carolina can use the SC MAPS lessons and cartographic products to help their children learn about Ellicott's Rock, Commissioner's Rock and other interesting natural and man-made features in the Jocassee Gorges region as they

explore this unique landscape in depth. Map-based activities allow students to practice math skills using latitude and longitude as well as science and social studies skills involved with exploring rivers and landscape features of the area.

In addition to Ellicott's surveyed boundary line, other types of state boundary lines include the Chattooga River to the west and the Eastern Continental Drainage Divide east of Sassafras Mountain. Students can even use landscape information to plan a hiking trip to the region to connect their natural environment to subject matter they are learning

about in school.

Information and activities about the various cultural influences by Native Americans and Scottish settlers, the Blue Ridge terrain and its fragile environment as well as the modern use of the region to generate electricity are also explored in this program. For more information about the SC MAPS program, contact the SC MAPS Project Office at Clemson University at (864) 656-1560 or check out the Web site that has detailed information on this and many other regions of South Carolina at <http://www.clemson.edu/scmaps>. 



Ellicott's Rock along the banks of the Chattooga River is one of the many interesting geographical features used in the SC MAPS program from Clemson University. (Photo by Bill Bridwell)



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Record black bear harvest set in mountains

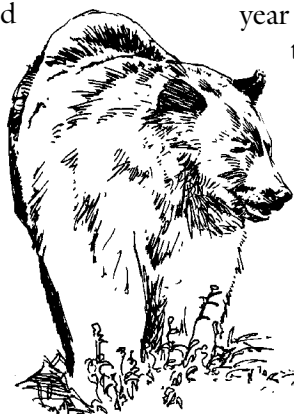
Bear population increasing in number
and range in S.C. mountains

A record number of black bears were harvested during the two-week bear-hunting season in the three South Carolina mountain counties, and the state's chief black bear biologist said this was expected since bear are increasing both their numbers and their range.

Fifty-eight black bears were harvested during the 2007 bear season, held the last two weeks of October in Greenville, Oconee and Pickens counties. This is the highest number of bear ever harvested during the two-week season, which is divided into one week of still-hunting and one week of hunting with dogs. The previous record of 55 bears harvested was set in 2003.

The highest number of bears harvested during the 2007 season was in Oconee County with 23, followed by Pickens County with 20 and Greenville County with 15.

"The harvest follows the pattern we have been seeing for years and follows all of our indicators," said Skip Still, black bear biologist with the S.C. Department of Natural



Resources based in Clemson. "We have been telling folks that the black bear population in the mountains and piedmont is expanding both in number and range and all indications—surveys, human/bear interactions, sightings, road kills—confirm those statements. The only thing surprising about the harvest is that we had a poor mast year while other surrounding states did not. Every bear

that I saw harvested this year was in good health and had a lot of fat reserves. Eight bear were over 400 pounds with the heaviest weighing 530 pounds."

The population of black bears in Game Zone 1, which consists of the northern portions of Oconee, Pickens and Greenville counties, is about 900 bear. Bears have expanded into Game Zone 2, made up of Anderson, Abbeville, Laurens, Newberry, Greenwood, McCormick, Saluda and Edgefield counties and the southern portions of Oconee, Pickens and Greenville counties. Bear sightings have been reported in every Upstate county during the past 10 years.

A coastal black bear population of about 300 bears is located primarily in Horry and Georgetown counties, although this population is not hunted. To learn more about black bear in South Carolina, visit www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/bear.